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Applicant(s): Eric T. Lambert, et al.

Docket No.

Y0R920000560US1

Application No.
09/751,585Filing Date
12/29/2000Examiner
Andrew Joseph RudyGroup Art Unit
3627

Invention: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ELECTRONICALLY QUALIFYING SUPPLIER PARTS

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER (General - Patent Pending)	Docket No. Y0R920000560US1
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In Re Application Of: Eric T. Lambert, et al.

Application No. 09/751,585	Filing Date 12/29/2000	Examiner Andrew Joseph Rudy	Customer No. 48915	Group Art Unit 3627	Confirmation No. 8383
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Title: **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ELECTRONICALLY QUALIFYING SUPPLIER PARTS**COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

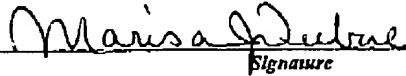
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Corrected Appeal Brief

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Dated: February 10, 2005

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPELLANT: ERIC T. LAMBERT ET AL)
SERIAL NUMBER: 09/751,585) Before the
FILED: December 29, 2000) Board of
FOR: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR) Appeals
ELECTRONICALLY QUALIFYING)
SUPPLIER PARTS) Appeal No.
)

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

CORRECTED APPEAL BRIEF

A Petition for Extension of Time (1 month) is filed herewith. This corrected Appeal Brief is submitted in response to a Notification of Non-Compliance mailed on December 14, 2004.

THE REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest in this appeal is International Business Machines, Inc. Ownership by International Business Machines, Inc. is established by assignment document recorded for this application on March 28, 2001 on Reel 011657, Frame 0247.

RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellant knows of no related patent applications or patents under appeal or interference proceeding.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-39 have been cancelled. Claims 40-71 stand rejected. The rejections

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of claims 40-71 are herein appealed.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

There have been no amendments filed subsequent to receipt of the final office action.

SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

A concise explanation of the subject matter defined in each of the independent claims 40, 50, and 62 involved in the appeal is provided below:

Claim 40

Claim 40 recites “[a] method for facilitating part qualification functions in a communications network environment.”

The method comprising “creating a commodity template for a commodity, said commodity associated with a supplier part.” Referring to FIGs. 1-4, part qualification functions including creating a commodity template for a commodity (FIG. 3, steps 302-316; page 9, lines 15-20). The commodity is associated with a supplier part via a “common repository for part qualification data that is stored in a variety of locations such as databases 120” (page 6, lines 4-6). The databases 120 include parts databases (FIG. 2, 214 and 216; page 8).

The creating a commodity template further comprising “entering requirements data for qualifying said commodity” (FIG. 3, step 306; page 9, lines 18-20)

The creating a commodity template further comprising “selecting at least one database in a part qualification repository for storing said requirements data, said part qualification repository comprising: a parts database receiving information from a commercial parts database; a technology survey database; a quality information

network database; an archives database; and a system testing database" (FIG. 3, step 308; page 9, lines 20-22).

The method further comprising "assigning a default viewing tool for qualifying said commodity based upon said at least one database selected" (FIG. 3, step 308; page 9, lines 22-23).

The method further comprising "establishing access restrictions operable for restricting and authorizing viewing and editing capabilities associated with said commodity template (FIG. 3, step 310; page 9, lines 23-26); wherein said requirements data stored in databases associated with said part qualification repository are shared among said databases" (Page 4, lines 13-15; Page 12, lines 6-10)

Claim 50

Claim 50 recites "[a] system for facilitating part qualification functions in a communications network environment."

The system comprising "a host system including a web server an applications server, and a database server." Referring to FIG. 1, the system comprises a host system (FIG. 1, 110) that includes a web server (FIG. 1, 104) an applications server (FIG. 1, 106), and a database server (FIG. 1, 108).

The system further comprising "a part qualification repository in communication with said host system." FIG. 1 depicts a part qualification repository 118 in communication the host system 110. Also, the part qualification repository "resides within intranet 112 and...is logically addressable across a distributed environment such as network system 100" (page 5, lines 2-7).

The part qualification repository storing "a parts database receiving information extracted from a commercial parts database; a technology survey

database; a quality information network database; an archives database; and a system testing database." Referring to FIG. 2, the repository stores a parts database 214. A commercial parts database 216 is also shown in FIG. 2. "Information is extracted nightly from database 216 and stored in database 214 for use by the part qualification tool" (page 8, lines 14-18). FIG. 2 also depicts a technology survey database 204, a quality information network database 210, an archives database 202, and a system testing database 212 (see also pages 6-8).

The system further comprising "at least one workstation in communication with said host system." FIG. 1 depicts workstations 114 in communication with the host system 110 via a LAN 112 and further depicts workstations 154 in communication with host system 110 via an extranet 140. Additionally shown in FIG. 1 is a workstation 130 in communication with host system 110 via a remote network (see also page 3).

The system further comprising "a parts qualification software executing on said host system." The host system 110 includes an applications server 106 as shown in FIG. 1. "Applications server 106 executes the part qualification software" (page 4, lines 18-19).

The system further comprising "a part qualification plan template created by said parts qualification software, said part qualification plan template associated with a commodity." A template created by the parts qualification software is associated with a commodity (page 9, lines 17-18).

The part qualification plan template comprising "requirements data operable for qualifying said commodity; at least one proposed database in said part qualification repository for storing said requirements data; an assigned default viewing tool for accessing said requirements data, said assigned default viewing tool selectable based on said at least one proposed database; a text message field, said text message field operable for explaining qualification data and for selecting a reference document

for viewing; and an access permissions structure.” Requirements data (page 9, lines 19-20) includes type of data required to qualify a commodity. A proposed database (page 9, lines 20-22) and default viewing tool (page 9, lines 22-23) are included in the template. The template further includes a text message field (FIG. 5, 510) for explaining qualification data (page 10, line 23-24) and for selecting a reference document for viewing (page 10, lines 29-30). An access permissions structure is provided in the template (page 10, lines 14-15).

Claim 62

Claim 62 recites “[a] storage medium encoded with machine readable computer program code for facilitating part qualification functions in a communications network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method.” (page 13).

The method comprising “creating a commodity template for a commodity, said commodity associated with a supplier part.” Referring to FIGs. 1-4, part qualification functions including creating a commodity template for a commodity (FIG. 3, steps 302-316; page 9, lines 15-20). The commodity is associated with a supplier part via a “common repository for part qualification data that is stored in a variety of locations such as databases 120” (page 6, lines 4-6). The databases 120 include parts databases (FIG. 2, 214 and 216; page 8).

The creating a commodity template further comprising “entering requirements data for qualifying said commodity” (FIG. 3, step 306; page 9, lines 18-20).

The creating a commodity template further comprising “selecting at least one database in a part qualification repository for storing said requirements data, said part qualification repository comprising: a parts database receiving information from a commercial parts database; a technology survey database; a quality information network database; an archives database; and a system testing database”(FIG. 3, step

308; page 9, lines 20-22).

The method further comprising "assigning a default viewing tool for qualifying said commodity based upon said at least one database selected" (FIG. 3, step 308; page 9, lines 22-23).

The method further comprising "establishing access restrictions operable for restricting and authorizing viewing and editing capabilities associated with said commodity template (FIG. 3, step 310; page 9, lines 23-26); wherein said requirements data stored in databases associated with said part qualification repository are shared among said databases" (Page 4, lines 13-15; Page 12, lines 6-10).

Reference to the specification and drawings is made pursuant to 37 CFR 1.192 and is not intended to limit the claims to the embodiments shown and described in the application.

GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Claims 40, 45-50, 57-62, and 67-71 have been rejected as being allegedly unpatentable over Ferriter et al. in view of Ensel et al. The rejection of claims 40, 45-50, 57-62, and 67-71 as being allegedly unpatentable over Ferriter et al. in view of Ensel et al. is to be reviewed on appeal.

Claims 41-44, 51-56, and 63-66 have been rejected as being allegedly unpatentable over Ferriter et al. and Ensel et al. as applied to claims 40, 50, and 62, and further in view of Aycock et al. The rejection of claims 41-44, 51-56, and 63-66 as being allegedly unpatentable over Ferriter et al. and Ensel et al. as applied to claims 40, 50, and 62, and further in view of Aycock et al. is to be reviewed on appeal.

ARGUMENT

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Rejection of Claims 40, 45-50, 57-62, and 67-71

Claims 40, 45-50, 57-62, and 67-71 have been rejected as being allegedly unpatentable over Ferriter et al. in view of Ensel et al.

The Examiner states, with respect to claims 40, 50, and 62, that Ferriter et al. discloses "a system and method for facilitating parts qualification functions in a communications network comprising creating a commodity template for a commodity associated with a supplier part (Abstract) comprising entering requirements data for qualifying the commodity (col. 4, lines 11-43); selecting a parts database (1) for storing the requirements database; and assigning a default viewing tool for qualifying the commodity based upon the database selected (FIGs. 2-4).

The Examiner concedes that Ferriter et al. do not disclose a technology survey database, a quality information network database, an archive database, or a systems database, but states that such databases are common in the art, and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ such database for storing requirements data. The Examiner further concedes that Ferriter et al. do not teach establishing access restrictions, but indicates that access restrictions are common in the art.

Referring to the Figures of Ferriter et al., a top-down design design approach wherein a sketch sheet is used to design a product in which a user keys in part descriptions (col. 2, lines 34-37) is taught. The system "automatically draws a hierarchical tree structure" using the descriptive information (col. 2, lines 37-38, FIG. 2). The descriptive information entered by the designer includes a product name, its major components (individually entered by the user), followed by entering subcomponents (col. 4, lines 11-43). The system "decomposes the product structure into a parts list 18, and quantity of each part as well as cost per part are pulled from the manufacturing information table in the relational database associated with each item. The cost estimating function then multiplies each part on the list by quantity of that part, then by cost of that part. The results for the parts list are added. The labor estimate is multiplied by the standard hourly labor and burden rate. The results of the parts list multiplication and the labor multiplication are added, and the result is output

to the user" (col. 5, lines 1-11). Thus, Ferriter is devoid of any teaching or suggestion of qualifying supplier parts, but rather teaches *a design tool that extracts pricing and manufacturing information associated with components of a design created by a user which gives the designer a way to anticipate costs and time factors associated with a product's manufacture* (emphasis added).

Referring to Figure 1 in the Ferriter reference, the Examiner asserts that database (10) teaches a part qualification repository for storing requirements data and comprising a parts database. The database (10) recited in the Ferriter reference is a relational database that captures *a product structure that is entered by a user into a table* (col. 4, lines 13-15) (emphasis added). Moreover, the parts database of the Appellants' claims 40, 50, and 62 receives *information from a commercial parts database* (emphasis added). Thus, even if the parts database of the Appellants' claims 40, 50, and 62 could be considered equal to the database (10) of the Ferriter reference, nowhere in the Ferriter reference does it teach or suggest "receiving information from a commercial parts database." In addition, the part qualification repository of the Appellants' claims 40, 50, and 62 recite a technology survey database, a quality information network database, an archives database, and a system testing database. None of these features are recited in the Ferriter reference. As Ferriter does not teach or recite qualifying parts, neither the requirements data nor the databases recited in the Appellants' claims 40, 50, and 62, which are used to qualify parts, are not taught or suggested by Ferriter.

The Examiner indicated that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include a technology survey database, a quality information network database, an archives database, and a system testing database with the design tool of the Ferriter reference as they 'would be logical repositories for such information.' The Examiner has taken Official Notice that such elements are common and well known in the art. The Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner's use of Official Notice in this circumstance is improper. MPEP § 2144.03 defines when it is proper to use Official Notice. In particular, the MPEP states "Official notice unsupported by documentary evidence should only be taken by the examiner where the facts asserted to be well-known, or to be common knowledge in the art are capable

of instant and unquestionable demonstration as being well-known." The MPEP also states "It would not be appropriate for the examiner to take official notice of facts without citing a prior art reference where the facts asserted to be well known are not capable of instant and unquestionable demonstration as being well-known." The MPEP gives as an example specific knowledge of the art. In this case, the limitations of a part qualification repository comprising a technology survey database, a quality information network database, an archives database, and a system testing database for use in qualifying parts in a communications network environment are not capable of instant and unquestionable demonstration as being well-known. Appellant asserts that it is improper to rely on Official Notice for the limitations recited in claims 40, 50, and 62.

Also, Ferriter is devoid of teaching or suggesting assigning a default viewing tool for qualifying the commodity based upon the database selected as indicated by the Examiner. Figures 2-4 of the Ferriter reference simply illustrate computer screen displays of hierarchical product structures designed by a user. Neither Ferriter nor Ensel teach the step of sharing requirements information with multiple databases. The Ensel reference is directed to a billing and payment application. Customer bills and resulting payments are processed and managed using this billing and payment application. Appellants' claims 40, 50, and 62 recite sharing 'requirements' data among databases for qualifying parts. Furthermore, neither Ferriter nor Ensel recite establishing access restrictions as provided in Appellants' claims 40, 50, and 62.

For at least the reason that not all of the elements set forth in claims 40, 50, and 62 are taught by Ferriter and Ensel either alone or in combination, claims 40, 50, and 62 patentably define over Ferriter and Ensel. Claims 45-49 depend from claim 40 and, thus, include all of the limitations of claim 40. Claims 57-61 depend from claim 50 and, thus, include all of the limitations of claim 50. Claims 68-71 depend from 62 and, thus, include all of the limitations of claim 62. At least due to their dependency on allowable claims 40, 50, 62, claims 45-49, 57-61, and 68-71 patentably define over Ferriter et al. in view of Ensel.

Rejection of Claims 41-44, 51-56, and 63-66

Claims 41-44, 51-56, and 63-66 were rejected as being allegedly unpatentable over Ferriter et al. and Ensel et al. as applied to claims 40, 50, and 62 and further in view of Aycock et al.

Claims 41-44, 51-56, and 63-66 should be patentable as depending from what should be allowable independent claims 40, 50, and 62 as set forth above.

Notwithstanding, with respect to Appellants' claims 41 and 63, the Examiner states that Aycock teaches a method of qualifying parts comprising selecting entities to perform the tasks of providing parts based on maturity requirements (cols. 6 and 7) and further asserts that it is inherent that the maturity requirements include due dates. The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to employ the teachings of Aycock with the combination of Ferriter and Ensel to select a supplier that can meet the users needs.

The Appellants submit that Aycock qualifies suppliers by sending vendor requirements to suppliers in the form of maturity questions (col. 5, lines 44-65, col. 6, lines 21-33 and lines 55-59). According to Aycock, qualifying a supplier involves assigning a weight to these requirements in accordance with their importance, and scaling the responses received from suppliers to determine a supplier maturity level (col. 6, lines 18-27 and lines 59-67). The feedback from suppliers are validated by the entity doing the qualifying by performing an onsite evaluation of the supplier and comparing the results of the evaluation against the supplier responses (col. 3, lines 36-39). The qualification of the Appellants invention, on the other hand, qualifies technologies and supplier parts according to a related commodity type, which is not taught or suggested by Aycock. Accordingly, not all of the elements provided in claims 41 and 63 are taught or suggested by Ferriter, Ensel, and Aycock, either alone or in combination. The Appellants, therefore submit that the rejection of claims 41 and 63 patentably define over Ferriter, Ensel, and Aycock.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is urged that the final rejection of claims 40-71 be overturned. The final rejection is in error and should be reversed. The fee set forth in 37 CFR 41.20(b)(2) is enclosed herewith. If there are any additional charges with respect to this Appeal Brief, or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 50-0510 maintained by Appellants' assignee.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: February 10, 2005

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CLAIM APPENDIX

Claims 1-39 (cancelled).

Claim 40. A method for facilitating part qualification functions in a communications network environment, comprising:

 creating a commodity template for a commodity, said commodity associated with a supplier part, comprising:

 entering requirements data for qualifying said commodity;

 selecting at least one database in a part qualification repository for storing said requirements data, said part qualification repository comprising:

 a parts database receiving information from a commercial parts database;

 a technology survey database;

 a quality information network database;

 an archives database; and

 a system testing database;

 assigning a default viewing tool for qualifying said commodity based upon said at least one database selected;

 establishing access restrictions operable for restricting and authorizing viewing and editing capabilities associated with said commodity template;

 wherein said requirements data stored in databases associated with said part qualification repository are shared among said databases.

Claim 41. The method of claim 40, wherein said part qualification plan template comprises:

 requirements data operable for qualifying said commodity;

 at least one proposed database in said part qualification repository for storing said requirements data;

 an assigned default viewing tool for accessing said requirements data, said assigned default viewing tool selectable based on said at least one proposed database;

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a text message field, said text message field operable for explaining qualification data and for selecting a reference document for viewing; an access permissions structure; and a plan framework comprising:
a plurality of tasks;
individual or entity responsible for said plurality of tasks; and due dates associated with said plurality of tasks;
wherein said qualification data is received from at least one of:
a development entity;
a supplier;
at least one of said databases associated with said part qualification repository; and
a technology engineer.

Claim 42. The method of claim 40, further comprising establishing a detailed qualification plan via said part qualification plan template, comprising:
entering a technology qualification name associated with said commodity;
receiving a list of suppliers associated with said technology qualification name;
selecting a supplier from said list; and
entering qualification data for said detailed qualification plan, said qualification data comprising:
a plurality of tasks;
individual or entity responsible for said detailed qualification plan;
due dates associated with said detailed qualification plan; and status information associated with said detailed qualification plan.

Claim 43. The method of claim 42, further comprising:

 updating said detailed qualification plan with data specific to said supplier part;

 analyzing said data, comprising:

 selecting and viewing a detailed qualification plan associated with a supplier for a specified technology;

 running reports against detailed qualification plans for suppliers associated with said specified technology and viewing said reports;

 qualifying said supplier part based on said analyzing said data;

 wherein said updating said detailed qualification plan comprises

 obtaining said data specific to said supplier part from at least one of:

 a supplier;

 at least one of said databases associated with said part qualification repository; and

 a technology engineer.

Claim 44. The method of claim 42, further comprising:

 viewing a status screen for a supplier part, said status screen comprising:

 a description of qualification data associated with said supplier part;

 a test message related to said supplier part qualification data;

 a status box indicating approval status;

 a recommended repository for said qualification data; and

 a description of said supplier part, said description referencing said supplier part by supplier part name and by a part name used by an enterprise that is qualifying said supplier part.

Claim 45. The method of claim 40, wherein said parts database stores a parts index, said parts index relating part numbers established by an enterprise qualifying a supplier part to part numbers used by a supplier being qualified.

Claim 46. The method of claim 40, wherein said technology survey database stores information relating to at least one new technology, said information provided by at least one of:

a development individual for an enterprise that is qualifying suppliers;
an engineering individual for said enterprise that is qualifying suppliers; and
an existing or prospective supplier associated with said at least one new technology.

Claim 47. The method of claim 40, wherein said quality information network database stores:

audit data related to a supplier;
standardized audit forms;
audit reports; and
auditing procedures.

Claim 48. The method of claim 40, wherein said archives database stores part qualification plans that are no longer active.

Claim 49. The method of claim 40, wherein said system testing database stores results of system testing specific to a particular corporate division of an enterprise that is qualifying suppliers.

Claim 50. A system for facilitating part qualification functions in a communications network environment, comprising:

a host system including a web server, an applications server, and a database server;
a part qualification repository in communication with said host system, said part qualification repository storing:
a parts database receiving information extracted from a commercial parts database;
a technology survey database;

a quality information network database;
an archives database; and
a system testing database; and
at least one workstation in communication with said host system; and
a parts qualification software executing on said host system;
a part qualification plan template created by said parts qualification software,
said part qualification plan template associated with a commodity;
wherein said part qualification plan template comprises:
requirements data operable for qualifying said commodity;
at least one proposed database in said part qualification
repository for storing said requirements data;
an assigned default viewing tool for accessing said
requirements
data, said assigned default viewing tool selectable based on said at least one proposed
database;
a text message field, said text message field operable for
explaining qualification data and for selecting a reference document for viewing; and
an access permissions structure.

Claim 51. The system of claim 50 wherein said part qualification plan template further comprises a plan framework comprising:

a plurality of tasks;
individual or entity responsible for said plurality of tasks; and
due dates associated with said plurality of tasks.

Claim 52. The system of claim 50, wherein said qualification data is received from at least one of:

- a supplier;
- at least one of said databases associated with said part qualification repository;

and

- a technology engineer.

Claim 53. The system of claim 50, further comprising a detailed qualification plan created via said part qualification plan template, comprising:

a technology qualification name associated with said commodity;
a supplier associated with said technology qualification name; and
qualification data for said detailed qualification plan, said qualification data comprising:

a plurality of tasks;
individual or entity responsible for said detailed qualification plan;
due dates associated with said detailed qualification plan; and
status information associated with said detailed qualification plan.

Claim 54. The system of claim 50, further comprising a status screen associated with a supplier part, said status screen comprising:

a description of qualification data associated with said supplier part;
a test message related to said supplier part qualification data;
a status box indicating approval status;
a recommended repository for said qualification data; and
a description of said supplier part, said description referencing said supplier part by supplier part name and by a part name used by an enterprise that is qualifying said supplier part.

Claim 55. The system of claim 54, wherein said text message is viewable by at least one of:

a document link; and
a hypertext link.

Claim 56. The system of claim 54, wherein said text message includes at least one of:

- a file name; and
- a comment.

Claim 57. The system of claim 50, wherein said parts database stores a parts index, said parts index relating part numbers established by an enterprise qualifying a supplier part to part numbers used by a supplier being qualified.

Claim 58. The system of claim 50, wherein said technology survey database stores information relating to at least one new technology, said information provided by at least one of:

- a development individual for an enterprise that is qualifying suppliers;
- an engineering individual for said enterprise that is qualifying suppliers; and
- an existing or prospective supplier associated with said at least one new technology.

Claim 59. The system of claim 50, wherein said quality information network database stores:

- audit data related to a supplier;
- standardized audit forms;
- audit reports; and
- auditing procedures.

Claim 60. The system of claim 50, wherein said archives database stores part qualification plans that are no longer active.

Claim 61. The system of claim 50, wherein said system testing database stores results of system testing specific to a particular corporate division of an enterprise that is qualifying suppliers.

Claim 62. A storage medium encoded with machine readable computer program code for facilitating part qualification functions in a communications network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method comprising:

creating a commodity template for a commodity, said commodity associated with a supplier part, comprising:

entering requirements data for qualifying said commodity;

selecting at least one database in a part qualification repository for storing said requirements data, said part qualification repository comprising:

a parts database receiving information from a commercial parts database;

a technology survey database;

a quality information network database;

an archives database; and

a system testing database;

assigning a default viewing tool for qualifying said commodity based upon said at least one database selected;

establishing access restrictions operable for restricting and authorizing viewing and editing capabilities associated with said commodity template;

wherein said requirements data stored in databases associated with said part qualification repository are shared among said databases.

Claim 63. The storage medium of claim 62, wherein said part qualification plan template comprises:

requirements data operable for qualifying said commodity;

at least one proposed database in said part qualification repository for storing said requirements data;

an assigned default viewing tool for accessing said requirements data, said assigned default viewing tool selectable based on said at least one proposed database;

a text message field, said text message field operable for explaining qualification data and for selecting a reference document for viewing;

an access permissions structure; and
a plan framework comprising:
a plurality of tasks;
individual or entity responsible for said plurality of tasks; and
due dates associated with said plurality of tasks;
wherein said qualification data is received from at least one of:
a development entity;
a supplier;
at least one of said databases associated with said part
qualification repository; and
a technology engineer.

Claim 64. The storage medium of claim 62, further comprising instructions for
causing said computer to implement:

establishing a detailed qualification plan via said part qualification plan
template, comprising:

entering a technology qualification name associated with said
commodity;

receiving a list of suppliers associated with said technology
qualification name;

selecting a supplier from said list; and

entering qualification data for said detailed qualification plan, said
qualification data comprising:

a plurality of tasks;

individual or entity responsible for said detailed qualification
plan;

due dates associated with said detailed qualification plan; and
status information associated with said detailed qualification
plan.

Claim 65. The storage medium of claim 63, further comprising instructions for

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causing said computer to implement:

 updating said detailed qualification plan with data specific to said supplier part;

 analyzing said data, comprising:

 selecting and viewing a detailed qualification plan associated with a supplier for a specified technology;

 running reports against detailed qualification plans for suppliers associated with said specified technology and viewing said reports;

 qualifying said supplier part based on said analyzing said data;

 wherein said updating said detailed qualification plan comprises

obtaining said data specific to said supplier part from at least one of:

 a supplier;

 at least one of said databases associated with said part qualification repository; and

 a technology engineer.

Claim 66. The storage medium of claim 64, further comprising instructions for causing said computer to implement:

 viewing a status screen for a supplier part, said status screen comprising:

 a description of qualification data associated with said supplier part;

 a test message related to said supplier part qualification data;

 a status box indicating approval status;

 a recommended repository for said qualification data; and

 a description of said supplier part, said description referencing said supplier part by supplier part name and by a part name used by an enterprise that is qualifying said supplier part.

Claim 67. The storage medium of claim 62, wherein said parts database stores a parts index, said parts index relating part numbers established by an enterprise qualifying a supplier part to part numbers used by a supplier being qualified.

Claim 68. The storage medium of claim 62, wherein said technology survey database stores information relating to at least one new technology, said information provided by at least one of:

- a development individual for an enterprise that is qualifying suppliers;
- an engineering individual for said enterprise that is qualifying suppliers; and
- an existing or prospective supplier associated with said at least one new technology.

Claim 69. The storage medium of claim 62, wherein said quality information network database stores:

- audit data related to a supplier;
- standardized audit forms;
- audit reports; and
- auditing procedures.

Claim 70. The storage medium of claim 62, wherein said archives database stores part qualification plans that are no longer active.

Claim 71. The storage medium of claim 62, wherein said system testing database stores results of system testing specific to a particular corporate division of an enterprise that is qualifying suppliers.